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INFO RUEHAC/AMEMBASSY ASUNCION 2670
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 3324
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STATE FOR IIP/G/WHA, INR/R/MR, WHA/BSC, WHA/PDA, INR/IAA

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TAGS: [OPRC](#) [PREL](#) [KMDR](#) [KPAO](#) [PGOV](#) [VE](#) [BR](#) [PA](#) [PE](#) [CI](#)

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION - VENEZUELA'S AGREEMENT TO ASSIST BOLIVIA
BUILD MILITARY BASES NEAR ITS BORDER

¶1. Summary: Revelations of an agreement between Venezuela and Bolivia to build military bases along Bolivia's frontier with Brazil, Paraguay, Peru, and Chile generated considerable public commentary in Santiago. Chile's Senate Foreign Relations and Defense Committees summoned the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Defense to review the pact. President Bachelet's spokesman downplayed the Venezuelan-Bolivian agreement, stating that it is "similar to those Chile has with other countries...."
End summary.

¶2. Conservative, influential newspaper-of-record "El Mercurio" (circ. 129,000; 10/10) headline: "Venezuelan Foreign Minister Nicolas Maduro: 'Everything is part of a U.S. Campaign.'" Maduro said the controversy in Chile over the military agreement between Hugo Chavez and Evo Morales is the result of a U.S. campaign to "antagonize" Chile and Venezuela directed from sectors in the United States.

¶3. Government-owned, editorially independent "La Nacion" (circ. 4,200): "One way or another (the controversy) is part of a campaign financed and directed from the U.S. by sectors that through intrigue...and manipulation want to antagonize our countries," said Maduro. He called to "cease the anti-Venezuela campaign that we are sure is fed and encouraged by sectors that do not want our people and government to have good relations."

¶4. Conservative, influential newspaper-of-record "El Mercurio" (circ. 129,000; 10/9-10/10) reactions: House Foreign Relations Committee chairman Jorge Tarud (PPD): "This kind of activity is a threat for regional stability.... The military intervention of a third country in Bolivia is evidently a concern."

House Defense Committee Chairman Patricio Hales (PPD) said the military agreement between Chavez and Morales is "highly disturbing and contrary to cooperation agreements that exist among countries in the region."

Former Undersecretary of Aviation Nelson Haddad said the agreement is a "threat to the region's stability," creates "unnecessary suspicion" between Bolivia and Chile and "constitutes a new form of intervention in the internal affair of a Latin American country."

Former Army Commander-in-Chief Juan Emilio Cheyre said the agreement was "unacceptable" and labeled it "rupturing interventionism."

Government spokesman Ricardo Lagos Weber, however, said the military agreement between Venezuela and Bolivia is similar to those Chile has with other countries, adding that Bolivia's border protection policy is "no secret." He said countries sign agreements to develop military infrastructure and that the Chavez-Morales military agreement is normal, traditional cooperation.

KELLY